

John Holliday writes:

"Malcolm McLaurin served as chamberlain at a time of great estate turbulence from 1801 to 1811. He is said to have been an unpopular figure with the Duke, despite this assessment from the Duke's right-hand man: "To give the devil his due, Mr McLaurin has already done a great deal in that matter [rent collection], in as far as, from being the worst paid of your rents, Tiree now pays sooner and better than any estate belonging to you" [Cregeen 1964, 52]. Unsurprisingly, given the huge changes that were transforming the island as a result of 'Improvement', he was also unpopular with many islanders, credited with magical powers: "He used to have a black book. Aye! McLaurin was the name. And when he opened this black book, he had a hoop of steel put round his head, and he could find out anything at all. One of his men got a big pole on the beach, and he was very proud of this pole; it could make a mast in his smack. And the pole was stolen ... Well, he opened the book, the factor, and he told my great-grandfather [Black] go to such and such a place and you'll find my pole there. And he did" [Donald Sinclair talking to Eric Cregeen on SA1969.165].

Donald Sinclair's great-grandfather, John Black, had been in the service of the Duke of Argyll in Inveraray, and came to Tiree with McLaurin: "My mother was brought up at Heylipol when she was a young girl, because at that time the factors were keeping horses and my grandfather was the groom there" [Donald Sinclair talking to Eric Cregeen on SA1969.161].

He also had another reputation: "He was a great man for the women; I don't think he was married at all." [Donald Sinclair talking to Eric Cregeen on SA1969.165] In 1810, two local women, Mary MacLean, Scarinish, and Janet Morrison, Balemartine, accused McLaurin in front of the Tiree Kirk Session of being the father of their illegitimate children. McLaurin admitted "being guilty" with one of the women, and was ordered to go to Mull with "his two concubines" to face a further cross-examination by the Presbytery [Henderson 2017, 34]. His employment did not seem to have survived this public humiliation. At the baptism of one of the children (Henrietta McLaurin, born 24 October 1811, mother Janet Morrison) the next year, he acknowledged himself as the father, but was described as a "late chamberlain" and living in Balemartine. Three years later he was registered as the father of another child (Cathrine McLaurin, born May 1814, mother Mary MacLean) his time living in Scarinish. He was also said to have been a doctor [Cregeen 2004, 233], and by 1825, he had moved to Oban where he was recorded as working as a physician [Pigot's New Commercial Dictionary for Scotland 1825]."

Catriona White, Lismore writes on 5 August 2017:

Malcolm McLaurin was the son of Neil and Ann McLaurin and Ann M'Laurin. He was born on 19th April **1765**, baptised 22nd April 1765, and die 5th June 1834 in Oban. He was buried in Ardchatten Priory.

Neil McLaurin was a tacksman on the Barcaldine Estate.

GD170/1325:

1776-1781: Letter from Scroll, Glenure to Neil McLaurin, tacksman of Eriska. Binds him to give McLaurin a tack of Sallachan for 19 years.

1776 and 1776-1781 two letters and enclosures.

GD170/1937 27th July 1787: Letter from Ann McLaurin to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, Advocate. Wishes payment of price of oats

Malcolm had four sisters. They were all born in Ardchattan and three did not marry. There may have been another son, Neil, who went into the army and died in 1810, and has a gravestone in Ardchattan priory, but there is no other link and he seems a bit young:

1. Margaret, who married Alexander Chisholm, a merchant in Arisaig, in 1800, and who died there in 1807. She was born on 20th August 1766 at Inveresragan Mill [possibly Innerergan which is Barcaldine]
2. Ann, who is found on the 1841 Census at No. 4 George Street, described as 'Independent' aged 49. She died before 1851.
3. Euphemia, 1841 Census same address, aged 43. On the 1851 Census she is aged 65. She died in 1863 aged 87.
4. Catherine died 16th Sept 1864, aged 86

GD170/1939: nineteen letters from Dr Malcolm McLaurin to Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine and Glenure, regarding the illness and death of Alexander's mother [possibly Mary MacPherson] in **1787**, and a dispute over farm of Sallachan **1792-1796**

"Shortly after its erection, Dalelea House was let for some years to Dr Maclaren, who lived there with his sisters" *Moidart among the Clanranalds* by Charles MacDonald page 128

Dalelea is on Loch Shiel so this must have been how Margaret met Alexander Chisholm. I assume it was from here Malcolm got the job of Chamberlain in Tiree

and went there with his three remaining sisters. He then rented the farm of Achnacreebeg from Campbell of Lochnell in **1803**.

I think it is unlikely he remained in Tiree after he was sacked as he was then fighting to retain Achnacreebeg:

**1814:** Decisions in the Court of Session 1781-1822. Campbell of Lochnell against Malcolm McLaurin. McLaurin had taken the tack of Auchinagreebeg in 1803 for twelve years on condition that he remained chamberlain too the Duke of Argyll. He stated in court that he had been the chamberlain on Tiree until 1812. McLaurin won his case, but presumably had to move out in 1815.

**1815** GD170/2605: Letter from Malcolm McLaurin to Sir Duncan Campbell of Barcaldine. Wishes tack of Glenure and Barnamuck dated Oban. I have no idea if he got his wish but Barcaldine put that part of his estate up for sale in 1816/1817, along with his Lismore lands.

20th August **1818** born or baptised Horatio Nelson McLaurin, son of Mary Livingstone, Appin and Malcolm McLaurin (they were not married). Though he was only sixteen when his father died, I assume Malcolm had already got Horatio into the Navy of the East India Company. He rose to Captain and married Ann Margaret McCallum. He bought a piece of land on the east side of George Street in Oban in 1865 (Sasine GR 3397, page 162)

In **1821** Malcolm McLaurin has a tack of Ardintallen:

SC51/50/4: Tack Gallanach to Malcolm McLaurin at present residing in Oban.  
Dugald MacDougall Esq. of Gallanach, to Malcolm McLaurin for fifteen years from Whitsunday 1821, rent £150

*Caledonian Mercury* 14th February **1824:** Ardintallen is advertised for rent. Further particulars from Proprietor or Dr McLaurin, Oban.

AD14/29/ 303 Crown Office: Precognitions **1829**. Precognition against Malcolm McLaurin for the crime of discharging loaded firearms at Oban.  
Accused Malcolm McLaurin, doctor, aged 50 [incorrect], Oban  
Victim Archibald Munn, Oban

JC 26/1829/156: Trial of Malcolm McLaurin 16th September 1829, Inveraray

According to the newspapers Malcolm died suddenly in Oban in **1834**.

He had a Will. I'm told he only mentions his sisters.

Catherine also had a Will, dated 1853, in which her nephew, Horatio of the East India Navy, at present in India, and Henrietta MacLaurin or Sinclair, wife of Donald Sinclair, carpenter, Tyree are mentioned, so I assume were beneficiaries. Catherine must have already died.

Caledonian Mercury 9th May 1807

An advert. for the roup of Malcolm M'Laurin's own cattle in Tiree on 20th May. Cows heifers stots and four bulls, his brood mares and followers and four score sheep crossed with South Down and Cheviot tups. Apart from the sheep there are no numbers.

The mind boggles at the thought of organising this in Tiree in 1807 and what about "the bloody flux"? It is a long advert.

Perthshire Courier 3rd July 1834

At Oban on 5th ult. Malcolm M'Laurin M.D. After rising at his usual hour and dressing, he was in the act of reaching down his watch, when he dropt to the floor and instantly expired.

Such detail is uncommon in a death notice.

I have not seen either Will.

Catriona White